

Exhibit A

Suzan and David Teman

November 23, 2020

The Honorable Judge Engelmayer
Southern District of New York
New York, NY

Dear Judge Engelmayer,

We are Ari Teman's parents. We are writing to you before his sentencing in the hope that we can shed light for you on our wonderful son, who we have seen struggle throughout his life but still dedicate himself to caring for others and doing good work. Ari has given us great joy as parents, but also a great deal of stress. His mental state has been especially precarious over the last ten years, and we have felt the need to intervene on several occasions when he made threats of suicide that we believed he was poised to carry out. Our Ari has for the last year faced one of the greatest challenges of his life. As we are sure you can appreciate if you are a father, it pains us to see our son in pain. We are committed to helping and supporting Ari, and we beg your kindness and understanding.

Ari was a very gifted and precocious, but awkward child. He was very sensitive as a young child, fragile even. He began taking the bus to school in first grade, when we lived in the small town of Springfield, NJ. He was one of the smallest kids on the bus, and he was bullied repeatedly by the older, bigger kids. On one occasion we had to take Ari to get stitches after another kid split his lip open. I (his father) finally had to intervene because the abuse became so bad, he would be too terrified to leave the house.

At school, Ari excelled in some classes but struggled in others. He learned to read in Kindergarten and was talented in both math and art. Some teachers saw Ari's gifts and nurtured him. But starting in first grade, Ari often found the schoolwork too simple. When he would complete it, his teachers would just give him more of the same busywork. He became bored, but the school would not accommodate him. They told us that Ari had behavioral issues and suggested he see a psychologist for ADHD. Ari was given various tests, and found not to have ADHD or any other deficits – there was just a mismatch between Ari's abilities and interests and what the school could offer him. This led to more bullying by other kids and struggles with the teachers. We ended up moving Ari to different elementary and middle schools but he encountered the same problems wherever he went.

When Ari was an adolescent, he began to have more serious mental and physical health issues. On the physical side, he developed persistent Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), which was constant, unpleasant irritant in his life. At one of the most difficult ages, when kids are trying to fit in and show off how "mature" they are, Ari was dealing with the fear that he might not be able to control his bowel movements or find a bathroom in time. We took him to see several specialists -- gastroenterologists, Crohns and Colitis specialists, dieticians, and behavior modification/stress counselors. None could help him and the IBS made it increasingly difficult

for Ari to function in the mornings, which made it challenging for him to get to school. After many attempts, we traveled with Ari to see Dr. Drossman in Durham, NC. He was the first to provide some comfort to Ari, with techniques to manage the stress and anxiety that went along with and exacerbated his IBS. The experience with Dr. Drossman had a significant impact on Ari and, we believe, led him to organize the medical conferences he would later lead, which Dr. Drossman agreed to chair on Ari's invitation.

Ari's breathing difficulties also were a persistent struggle, disrupting his sleep and causing him to experience depression and, at times, physical pain. After a variety of specialists examined Ari in sleep studies, it was determined that his sleep apnea was so severe that he was never entering REM sleep and was instead gasping for air every two minutes. Experts advised us that such extensive sleep deprivation greatly exacerbated by a material lack of breathing was contributing to Ari's mental illness and the cognitive and social challenges that tortured Ari for years. As an adult, Ari underwent an eleven-hour, delicate surgery to rebuild the many, tiny bone structures in his nasal passages that were impeding delivery of air to his lungs. He continues to have breathing difficulties, but the problem was especially bad when he was a teenager, and we simply did not know how to help him get better.

Around 8th grade, Ari started talking about suicide. The kind of typical setbacks that would affect any kid, but from which they could bounce back, would send Ari into a deep depression. We were of course very concerned, and we took Ari to see a psychiatrist, who involved him at first in talk therapy and later prescribed antidepressants. Ari did not react well to any of medications and instead experienced debilitating side-effects, such as severe hand tremors, which made it difficult for him to do art, one of his main outlets.

After pulling him out of the high school where he started (where the bullying was especially intense, including an incident where kids threw Ari down a flight of stairs), Ari managed to get through high school with some good experiences. He participated in the debate team, which he loved. He really thrived once he got to college at Brandeis. There, finally, he developed a close group of friends, was very active in social activities around campus, and majored in art and psychology. He started an independent school newspaper and was active with the campus Chabad house, organizing community events and welcoming new students to campus. Ari's volunteering and help to Chabad was so extensive and so well appreciated that he was later honored by the Brandeis Chabad as "Alumnus of the Year".

He had plans to move to New York City after graduation. He was optimistic about the future and we were too, though we were still very involved in his life, assisting him with every transition. We were hopeful, but wary, about his ability to manage on his own. In fact, Ari did quite well in New York. He started doing standup comedy and began working regularly in comedy clubs. He also built JCorps, an organization he conceived of to make it easy for young Jewish adults to get involved in helping others, while meeting each other. Ari personally worked for years in soup kitchens, hurricane relief, doing art with and reading to young children, participating in clean-ups, entertaining soldiers, and helping others. President and Mrs. Obama invited Ari to the White House Hanukkah Party in honor of his work with JCorps. We were very proud of him and we remain so.

About 10 years ago, Ari's psychological condition started to worsen. We had moved to Israel, where we had planned to retire. We thought the move was coming at a good time for Ari, since he seemed to be doing well. But Ari's sleep problems were becoming worse (we later found out that this was because the surgically-repaired bones in his nose had started to collapse and block his airways), and he was experiencing memory lapses, regular anxiety attacks, and episodes of severe depression. In September 2011, we were back in the US for a visit and received a text message from Ari saying he was going to kill himself by jumping off the George Washington Bridge. We were in Teaneck at the time we went to the bridge and called the police. Ari was there – he had taken a cab up from his apartment in the Village, so we believed it was a serious close call. The police took him into custody and brought him to the hospital. He was ultimately released but Ari was very shaken up by the experience, the loss of his agency and self-control.

After that, Ari appeared to recover, with the help of a dog he began taking care of. Ari has always been deeply soothed by pet dogs. As a child, we had a very friendly Sheltie that Ari helped raise from a puppy. When feeling sad or alone, he would hold the dog in his lap and caress it. As an adult, Ari has adopted two dogs, and has been very close to them. He gave the dog he adopted after his hospitalization to his aunt, when he became too ill to care for it. More recently, he adopted another dog, who he cares for constantly. He named her Tzahala, which means to dance with joy. She cares for him, too, and drags him out of bed to play on rough days. It is noticeable how calming it is for Ari to be with his dog.

Over the last 10 years, Ari has been in an up and down cycle. In 2012, Ari began seeing Dr. Eric Braverman who prescribed him medications that made him significantly worse. Ari was admitted to the Silver Hill mental health facility, which was a deeply traumatic experience. We do not know the details of what occurred at Silver Hill, but we understand there may have been some kind of sexual assault that occurred there. Ari felt trapped at that facility and felt that we abandoned him at that time. We were spending most of our time in Israel. We later learned that Dr. Braverman was investigated by the Attorney General's office and that Ari was paid a settlement by Silver Hill, but we do not know the details. We do know that this experience had a profound impact on Ari and that he has since been diagnosed with Post-traumatic stress disorder, which has been a theme of his struggles since that time.

We were not in close contact with him in the months between his arrest and trial. In the last few months, while Ari has been on house arrest, we have reestablished contact. We are worried that his condition has been seriously exacerbated by his incarceration when he was arrested and the stress of not knowing his fate in this case. Ari fears being abused in jail, which we attribute to his experience at Silver Hill and the violent, chaotic atmosphere at the detention center where he was housed last summer. Ari had major infections and required multiple hospital visits after just five days in Federal detention, and that was pre-COVID, due to the unclean conditions and close quarters. We fear that his breathing issues will make him vulnerable to being infected with COVID-19 if he cannot control his environment.

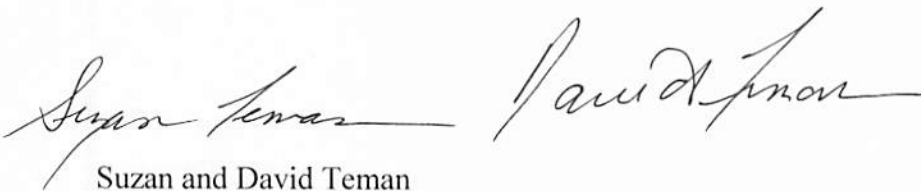
Since he has been on home detention, Ari's depression and suicidality have hit new bottoms and he has struggled to pull through. In addition to the stress of not knowing what will happen with

his case, Ari's loving partner left to return to her family in Australia. They had planned to have a child together, but their relationship and the future they planned together had to give way because she felt she could not wait any longer while he remained on house arrest indefinitely.

Ari has been under the care of a psychiatrist and anesthesiologist who have given him Ketamine infusions, which stabilize him for a period, but the ups and downs of worrying about his case while being cooped up inside have stretched him to the breaking point. We constantly fear getting a call in the middle of the night that something terrible has happened. Whatever the outcome in his case, we feel that Ari cannot go on much longer in his current circumstances.

Even in Ari's darkest, most stressful times, however, he has devoted his time to giving to others and helping others. He has continued in last years to excel in both his community service and business endeavors. While under house arrest since his trial, Ari has painted portraits of people he respects, and gifted the art to friends. He has hosted small comedy shows before the pandemic (and been incredibly isolated and depressed after, in near solitary confinement often for days at a time). He has continued to provide excellent service to the many customers of GateGuard, answering their calls, ensuring their devices remain working -- despite the crushing depression, debt, and the likely impending loss of his freedom. But we see a glimmer of hope in the fact that even on the edge of wanting to end his life, Ari still picks up the phone to keep his projects going and give his customers the dedicated service they deserve.

This is a letter that no parent should have to write. It pains us that Ari is in this position. We beg you, your Honor, to consider Ari's struggles and recognize that the last year of house arrest has been a profound punishment already. He has suffered tremendously and has work to do to pull his life together. We hope that he can put this episode behind him and start to do that. Thank you for considering what we have said. We pray that you will temper justice with mercy.



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